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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [KCFE](#) [AM](#) [OSCE](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DELIVERS WARNING ON ARMS CONTROL COMPLIANCE

REF: A. STATE 274209

[B](#). 04 STATE 79196

[C](#). 04 YEREVAN 891

Classified By: Ambassador John Evans for reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

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[1](#)1. (S/NF) In deploying troops to the coalition in Iraq and agreeing to a defense assessment, Armenia has taken important steps in building a broader, deeper defense relationship; lack of full compliance with conventional arms control regimes would negate that progress. That was the message the Ambassador delivered to Defense Minister Serzh Sargsian on January 11 in conjunction with a verbatim delivery of ref A talking points. Sargsian was defensive: declared that the cited incidents referred to movements of equipment not limited by treaty, complained about Azerbaijan's continued non-compliance with limits on TLE, and said that the dislocation of some TLE is beyond GOAM control (in N-K). The Ambassador pressed back: it is vital for Armenia to avoid even the perception of a lack of full compliance. Sargsian appreciated the intent of our message and said Armenia would comply fully with its obligations. End Summary.

Delivering the Message

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[1](#)2. (S/NF) On January 11 the Ambassador met with Defense Minister Serzh Sargsian to deliver reftel talking points regarding Armenia's compliance with conventional arms inspection regimes. This message was delivered formally by CDA on December 30 to Deputy Foreign Minister Markarian, but Markarian gave no substantive reply. With Sargsian was General Mikhael Melkonian, Chief of the MOD's Directorate for foreign relations and Colonel Haik Kotanjian, advisor to the Minister. DCM and DATT accompanied the Ambassador.

[1](#)3. (S/NF) The Ambassador prefaced his delivery of reftel points by outlining what is at stake: Armenia had taken significant steps to both broaden and deepen the defense relationship with the U.S. The decision and subsequent parliamentary approval of a deployment of troops to join the coalition in Iraq, together with Sargsian's agreement to host a Defense Assessment were significant. The change in how Armenia is perceived as a contributing partner is at serious risk if Armenia is judged to be out of full compliance with all relevant arms inspection regimes.

[1](#)4. (S/NF) Sargsian's first reaction was defensive. He attributed movement of military equipment to routine training requirements, planned long in advance. He said that since the training area for the regiment in Goris is located near Sisian, combat equipment must be frequently moved. He added that the MOD may on occasion reassign equipment to different units without fully coordinating within the various departments of the MOD so that proper notification can be made in Vienna. He noted that all of the 91 MTLBs that the MOD possesses are equipped as military ambulances and invited DCM and DATT to visit one of the units that have these vehicles. He also offered to provide a complete list of units with MTLB ambulances. At times Sargsyan seemed not to understand that the arms control agreements demand transparency in order to build confidence.

[1](#)5. (S/NF) Sargsyan expressed concern that the U.S. was worried about relatively minor Armenian compliance issues, while the real threat to stability in the region was Azerbaijan's intention to take Nagorno-Karabakh by force. He claimed that Azerbaijan received three times as much military equipment from the USSR than did Armenia and has subsequently purchased additional equipment from Ukraine, putting Azerbaijan over its CFE limits. He emphasized that the military balance between the two countries must be maintained.

[1](#)6. (S/NF) Sargsyan concluded by saying that Armenia would do everything necessary to fully comply with the CFE Treaty and Vienna Document and he did not want arms control compliance concerns to interfere with the developing bilateral military relationship.

EVANS